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# GILBERT STUART'S PORTRAITS OF MEN.

## I. GEORGE WASHINGTON.

BY CHARLES HENRY HART.

IT is not only eminently appropriate that the first portrait presented in this series should be that of the Pater Patriæ, but it is also entitled to first place for the reason that the portrait here given, leaving out all consideration of the importance of the subject, is, in my opinion, from the finest picture Gilbert Stuart ever painted, and I say this only after a long and mature study of Stuart's works to the number of several hundred. It is also, in point of time, the first portrait of Washington that Stuart made, although it is the least familiar, Stuart's late pictures, known as the Lansdowne and the Athenæum heads, being the popular portraits of Washington, particularly the latter, which has become the household Washington of the world. This has occurred by reason of the last-named portrait having hung for seventy years in a public gallery, easily accessible for reproduction, while the first portrait has never been out of private hands and so remained comparatively unknown until recently. But for this, the ideal Athenæum head could never have usurped the rightful place of the real first portrait. A study of the Stuart portraits of Washington, with the Houdon life-mask, that belonged for many years to the sculptor-poet W. W. Story, gives a very remarkable confirmation of the view here expressed as to the realism of this first portrait and the ideality of the later ones.

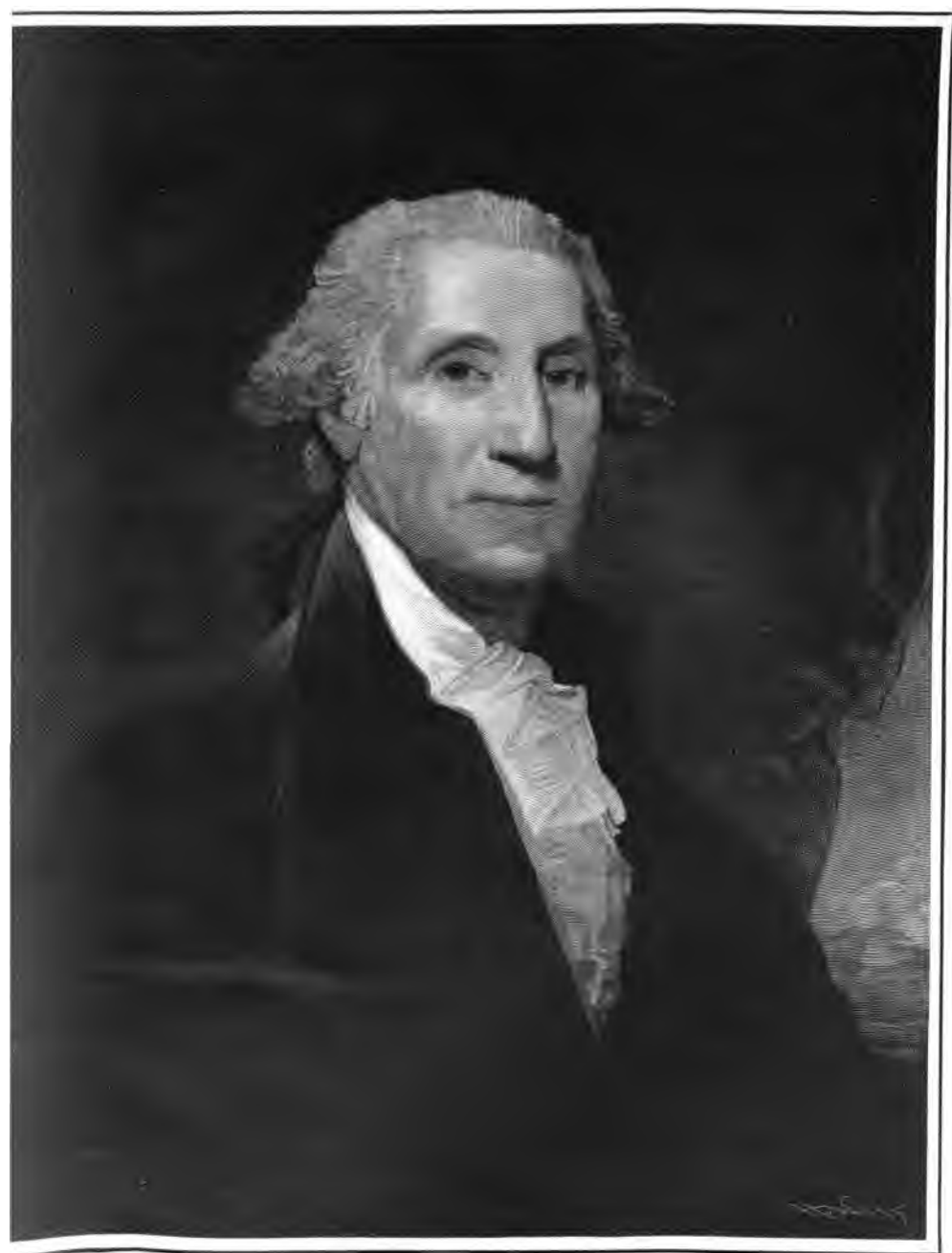
The picture, reproduced with infinite skill by Henry Wolf, preserving its simplicity, character, and color-sense in a marked degree, was painted in Philadelphia in 1795, and became the property of William Bingham, senator in Congress from 1795 to 1801, a patron of the fine arts and a friend of Stuart, for whom Stuart also painted the whole-length portrait of Washington, now in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, from which the painter made a replica for Bingham, which that gentleman presented to the Marquis of Lansdowne, and which is now owned by Lord Rosebery in London.

William Bingham's home in Philadelphia

was noted for its elegance, hospitality, and for the regal beauty of its mistress, who, before her marriage, was Ann, daughter of Thomas Willing, and here the eldest daughter, Ann, was married to Alexander Baring, afterward Lord Ashburton, of the Webster-Ashburton treaty. She went to reside in England, and there Bingham repaired, in shattered health, at the close of his senatorial career, and died at Bath in 1804. His mansion-house in Philadelphia remained intact until 1807, when the contents were sold at public auction, and Stuart's original first life-portrait of Washington was bought by James Kitchen, proprietor of the Merchant Exchange Coffee House, located but a block distant from Bingham's house, and who was a personal friend of Bingham. Kitchen's coffee-house was the place of meeting for all the first men of the town, merchants, lawyers, bloods, and blades, and this portrait of Washington was its chief ornament. Upon Kitchen's death, in 1828, the picture was inherited by his son, of the same name, an eminent physician of Philadelphia, who lived to his ninety-fourth year, and from whom it was purchased in 1892, after having been in his family for eighty-five years. It is now owned by Mr. Marsden J. Perry, of Providence, Rhode Island.

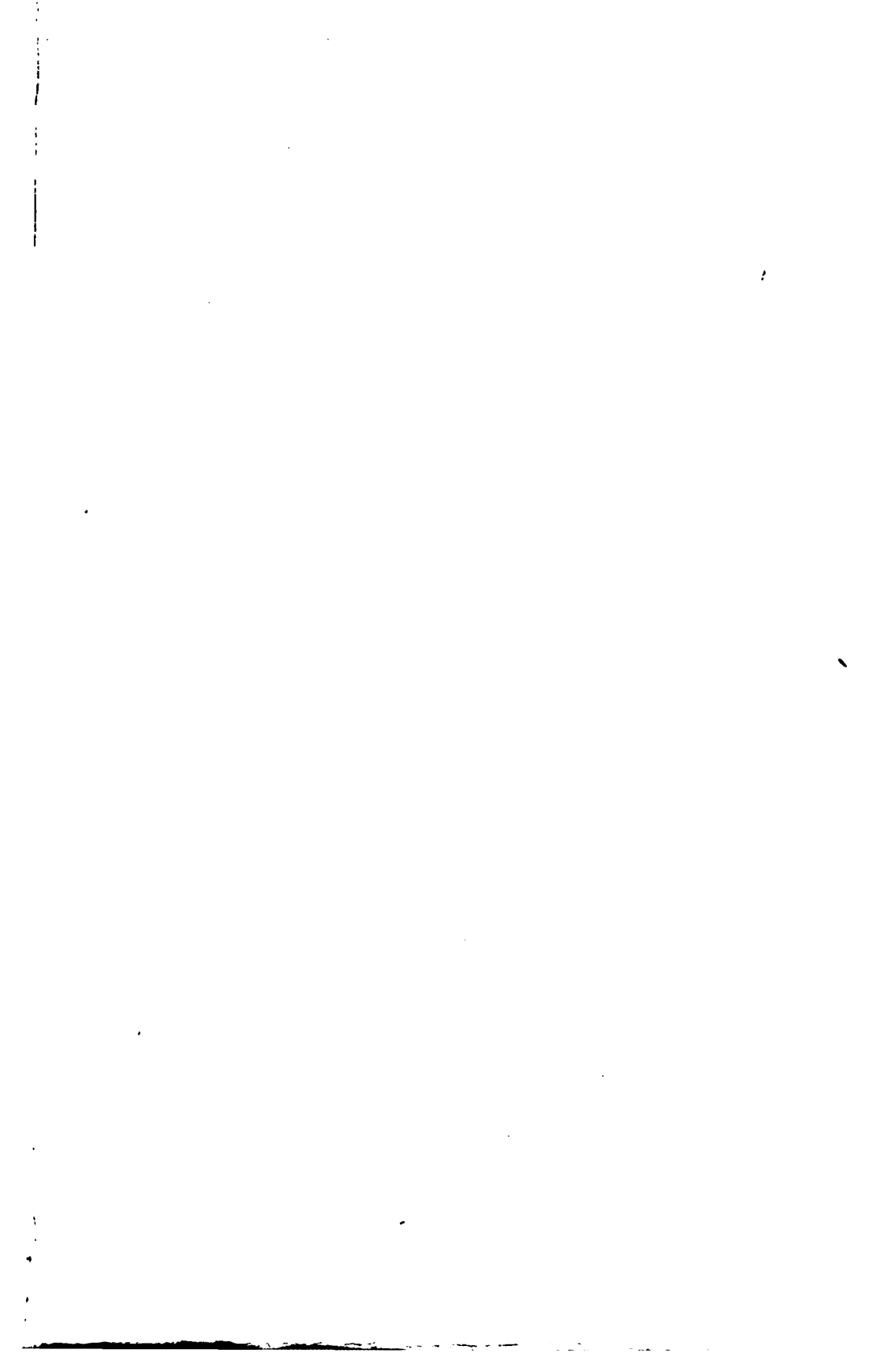
What makes this portrait particularly interesting is that it is an entirely distinct type from the commonly known "Stuart Washington," and of it there is no exact replica. Stuart did make perhaps half a dozen copies from it, but all exhibit some variation from the original, showing that Stuart was experimenting. The best-known and most important variant is the Gibbs-Channing picture, which has a green curtain in the background where in the present painting it is red. The work is a superb exemplar of the art of portrait-painting, and is itself sufficient to make and preserve forever the name and reputation of its masterful limner. Now that we know George Washington as a man we want also to see him as a man, and this we do in this great canvas before us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For additional notes on Stuart's portraits of Washington, see the author's articles in *THE CENTURY* for April, 1889, and September and November, 1899; in "*Harper's Magazine*" for August, 1896; and in "*McClure's Magazine*" for February, 1897.



ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY HENRY WOLF, FROM THE PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART, OWNED BY MARGUERITE J. PERRY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.



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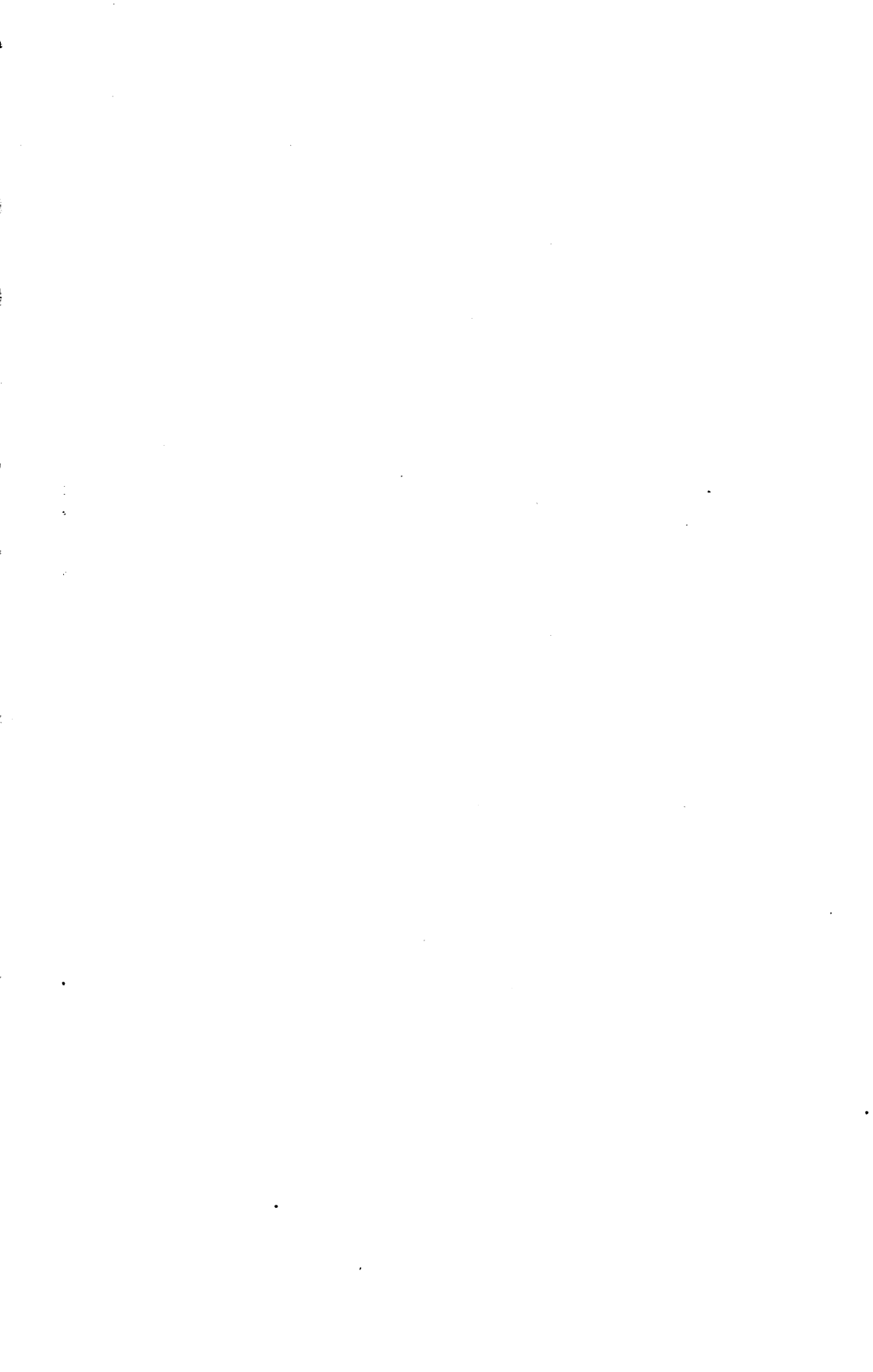
Two hundred copies printed from type, August, 1900.

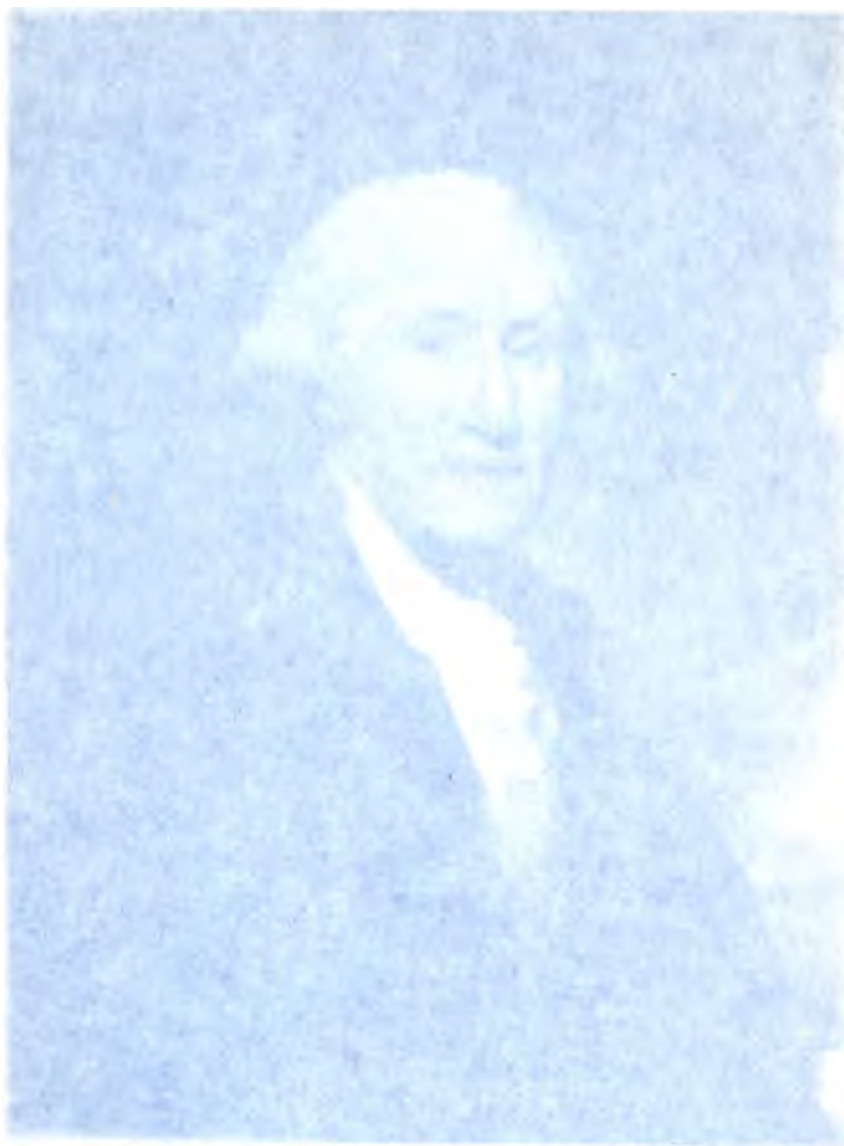
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**SOME ACCOUNT OF THE  
"GIBBS-CHANNING" PORTRAIT  
OF GEORGE WASHINGTON**









Some Account of the  
"Gibbs-Channing"  
Portrait of George  
Washington

Painted by Gilbert Stuart



Privately Printed  
New York . 1900



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**S**INCE the portrait of Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, known as the "Gibbs-Channing" portrait, passed into the possession of the present owner, he has often been requested to loan it for various public exhibitions, to allow it to be reproduced in different forms, and as often has been solicited to furnish information as to its history. The general recognition that this pictorial rendering of the "Father of his Country" is the most worthy of the many likenesses made of him, also that it is a supreme work of art by our greatest portrait painter, which for perfection of execution and immaculate condition stands pre-eminent, fully justifies the following presentation of facts relating to its history and record-



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

ing some of the critical praise which has been freely bestowed upon it.

It may be in order to first give the following letter from Dr. William F. Channing, from whom Mr. S. P. Avery, of New York, purchased the painting in 1889.

*Dear Sir:* You have requested me to furnish you with the record of the "Gibbs" Washington, derived from the publications relating to it, from my own researches, and from family tradition.

The "Gibbs" Washington is the representative picture of Washington's first sitting to Stuart, in September, 1795. This sitting originated the first type of the Washington portrait by Stuart, showing the right side of Washington's face. The Vaughan picture (painted for Samuel Vaughan,<sup>1</sup> sent to London, engraved by Holloway, and published there in 1796) and three other copies which exist, belonging to this type, were all painted, though perhaps not finished, in the latter part of 1795 or early part of 1796. All are very inferior to the "Gibbs" Washington in individuality of handling and detail. The "Gibbs" Washington was sold by Stuart, at an early date, to his warm personal friend, Colonel George Gibbs (died 1833) of New York, with the statement that it was on the easel while Washington was sitting, and worked upon from life. At a later period Colonel Gibbs, having purchased from Stuart a set of his Presidents of the United States, sold the Gibbs picture to his sister, Mrs. William Ellery Channing, who gave it, thirty

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Vaughan was a London merchant, resident for several years in Philadelphia, and a great admirer of Washington. He is the Mr. Vaughan who presented him with the handsomely carved mantel for Mount Vernon, which Washington termed in his diary—"My marble chimney piece." Mr. Vaughan took or sent the picture to London in the year in which it was painted, and was there engraved by T. Holloway, and there published in 1796.



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

years ago, to her son Dr. William F. Channing, the present owner and writer of this letter. The "Gibbs" Washington has thus never been out of the possession of the Gibbs-Channing family since it left Stuart's hands.

The original picture, resulting from Washington's second sitting, April, 1796, is the "Athenæum" head, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Stuart retained this picture in his own possession, and, as he did not want the Gibbs picture to come in competition with the head, which he had selected to multiply in future years by numerous copies, what more probable disposition could be made of it than to sell it to his cherished friend, in whose discretion he could trust? From all the circumstances, and from the internal evidence of the picture itself, my own conviction, shared by many artists, has increased that the Gibbs picture is (in the most restricted sense) the original of Washington's first sitting to Stuart. The picture has been engraved for Elizabeth B. Johnston's work, "The Original Portraits of Washington," 1882, in which she praises it highly, adding, "It is a pity, and a marvel, that it has not been more widely known."

Mr. George C. Mason, in his "Illustrated Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart," 1879, furnishes a fine photogravure of the picture as a frontispiece of the volume, and also an excellent line-engraving, by Charles Burt, in the body of the work. Mr. Mason says that "the finest, beyond all comparison," of the Stuart portraits of the first type is the "Gibbs" Washington. He adds: "The picture is superb, and in it the lower part of the face, so much criticized in the well-known portraits of Washington by Stuart, is remarkably well managed." Rembrandt Peale says, speaking of the Vaughan picture, an early Washington by Stuart: "In the lower part of the face it has the advantage over the other portraits that he afterward painted." This quality, in a much higher degree, appears in the Gibbs picture, with which Peale was probably unacquainted. The venerable A. B. Durand, when shown a photo-



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

graph of it, said: "That is a likeness. It is much superior in character to the Athenæum portrait, and should be considered the standard: both the artist and the subject would gain by it." He also said he wished he could have known of it in earlier life, evidently meaning that he would have engraved it, instead of the Athenæum portrait.

The "Gibbs" Washington is distinguished by its dignity as well as benignity of expression. The picture is in splendid preservation, the colors, as in so many of Stuart's pictures, retaining their original brilliancy.

I have a vivid recollection of the picture, nearly sixty years ago, hanging with other portraits in the house of my father, William Ellery Channing, in Boston.

Newport, Sept. 2, 1888.

WM. F. CHANNING.

Soon after the large "Anneline" photograph was taken of the painting by Wm. Kurtz, a copy of it was sent to Mr. Charles Henry Hart, of Philadelphia, a literary gentleman who has long been an acknowledged expert on subjects of art connected with American history. On the receipt of which he wrote as follows:

"ROSEMONT, Pa., January 18, 1896.

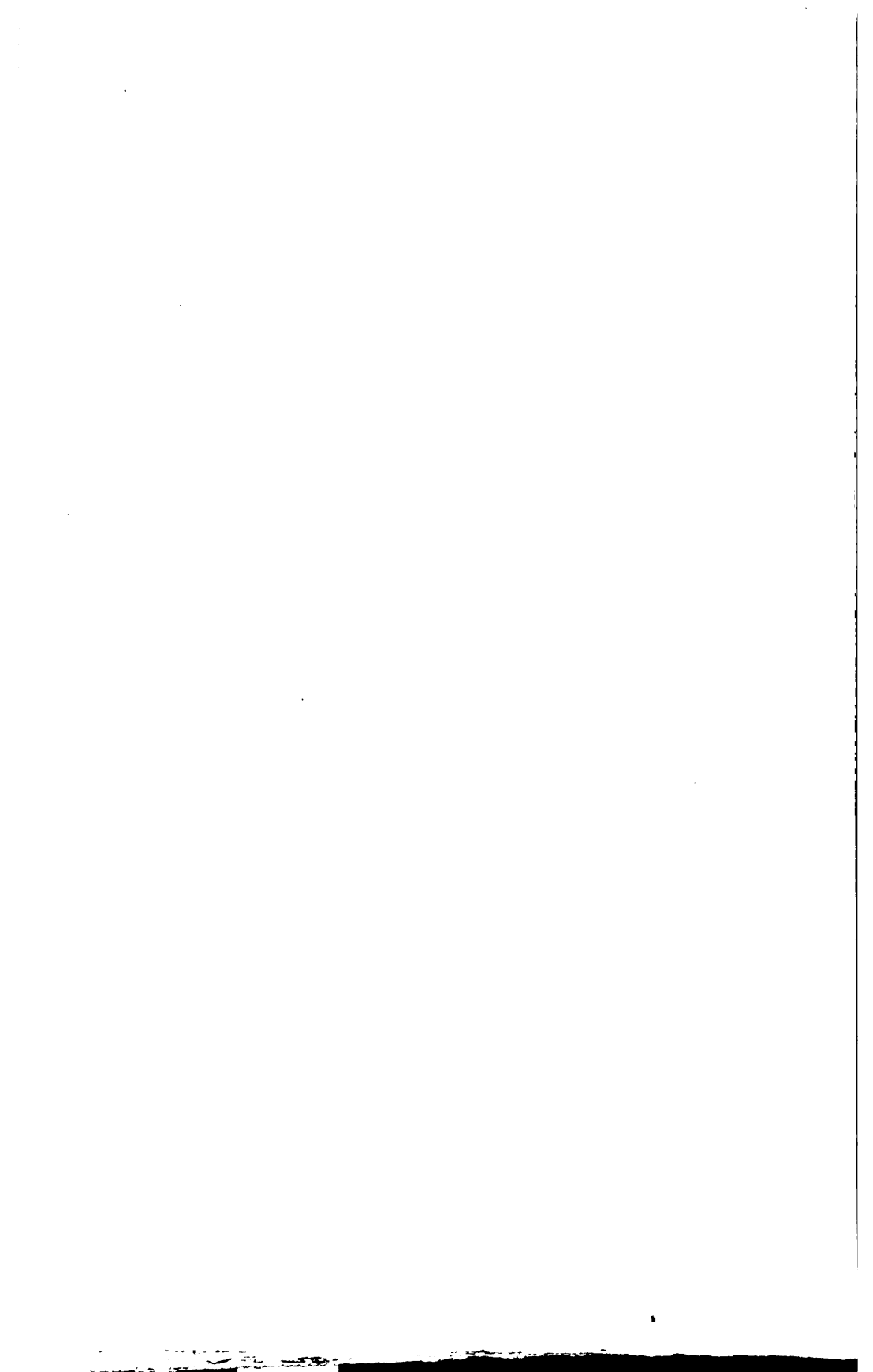
"*My dear Sir*: I found the superb photograph of your Washington awaiting me on my return, and I cannot express myself in regard to the original more strongly than I did in the 'American Art Review' for March, 1880, Vol. I, p. 219; as the volume may not be handy to you, I will quote from my review therein of Mason's





### *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

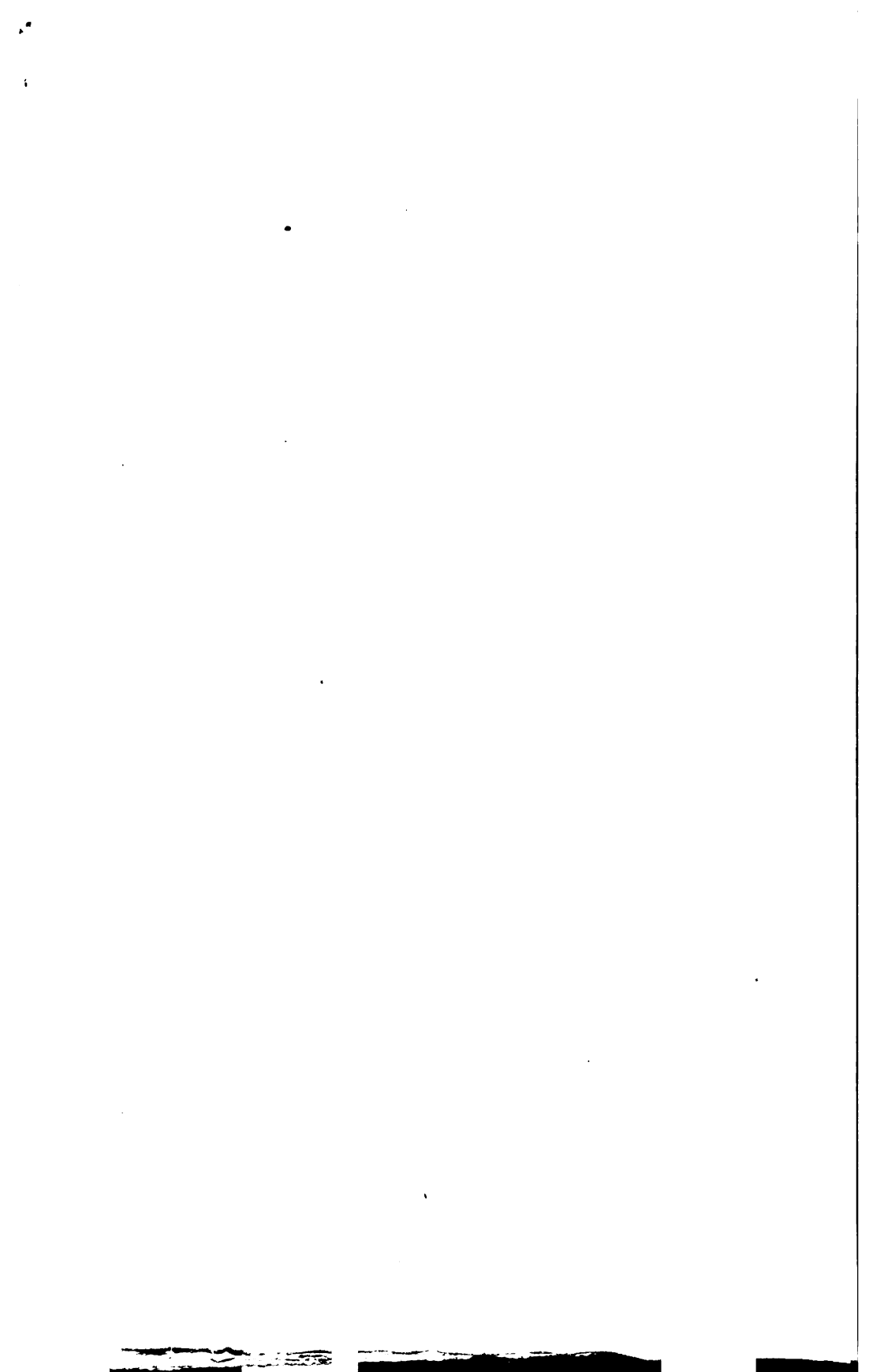
Life of Stuart: 'For introducing this last-named picture (Gibbs' Washington) to the public, Mr. Mason merits universal thanks, and it is only to be regretted that it has remained hidden so long. Had it been known earlier, we feel confident in asserting that the Athenæum head would not have become the accepted likeness of Washington. We had the privilege of seeing the Gibbs portrait when it was in the engraver's hands, and to say that it is noble as a portrait and grand as a picture is but to express feebly the impression it made upon us. In the first place, it is what the Lansdowne and Athenæum heads are not: it is the likeness of *a man* — a man who has lived among men; firmness and gentleness, decision and moderation, thoughtfulness and power, all are depicted there. One feels that Washington could have looked like this, and it is not unlike the portraits painted by other artists; but no one can ever feel thoroughly satisfied that he did look like the Lansdowne or the Athenæum heads. . . .'" Quoting still further from Mr. Hart's review, he says: "That Stuart was a master in the art of portrait painting it needs no argument to prove; his works are the only argument needed, and they prove it most satisfactorily. In his life-like por-



*The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

traits the men and women of a past generation live again. Each individual is here, and it was Stuart's ability to portray *the individual* that was his greatest power. Each face looks at you, and fain would speak, while the brilliant and animated coloring makes one forgetful that it is of the past. Stuart's pictures have come down to us very little injured by time, which is doubtless owing to the use by him of pure colors, and his manner of employing them."

The late Wm. S. Baker, of Philadelphia, the well-known author of the "Engraved Portraits of Washington," Philadelphia, 1880, and of other historical and bibliographical works relating to Washington, thus expressed himself: "I have received a copy of the splendid photograph of the Gibbs-Channing 'Washington.' I do not remember to have seen the original, but am exceedingly impressed with this reproduction and can truthfully say with Durand that '*this* is a likeness and much superior to the Athenæum head.' I am glad that the original of so valuable a portrait of the 'Father of his Country' is in such worthy hands. I must regard it as *the* portrait which is most consistent with the character of that great man. . . ."



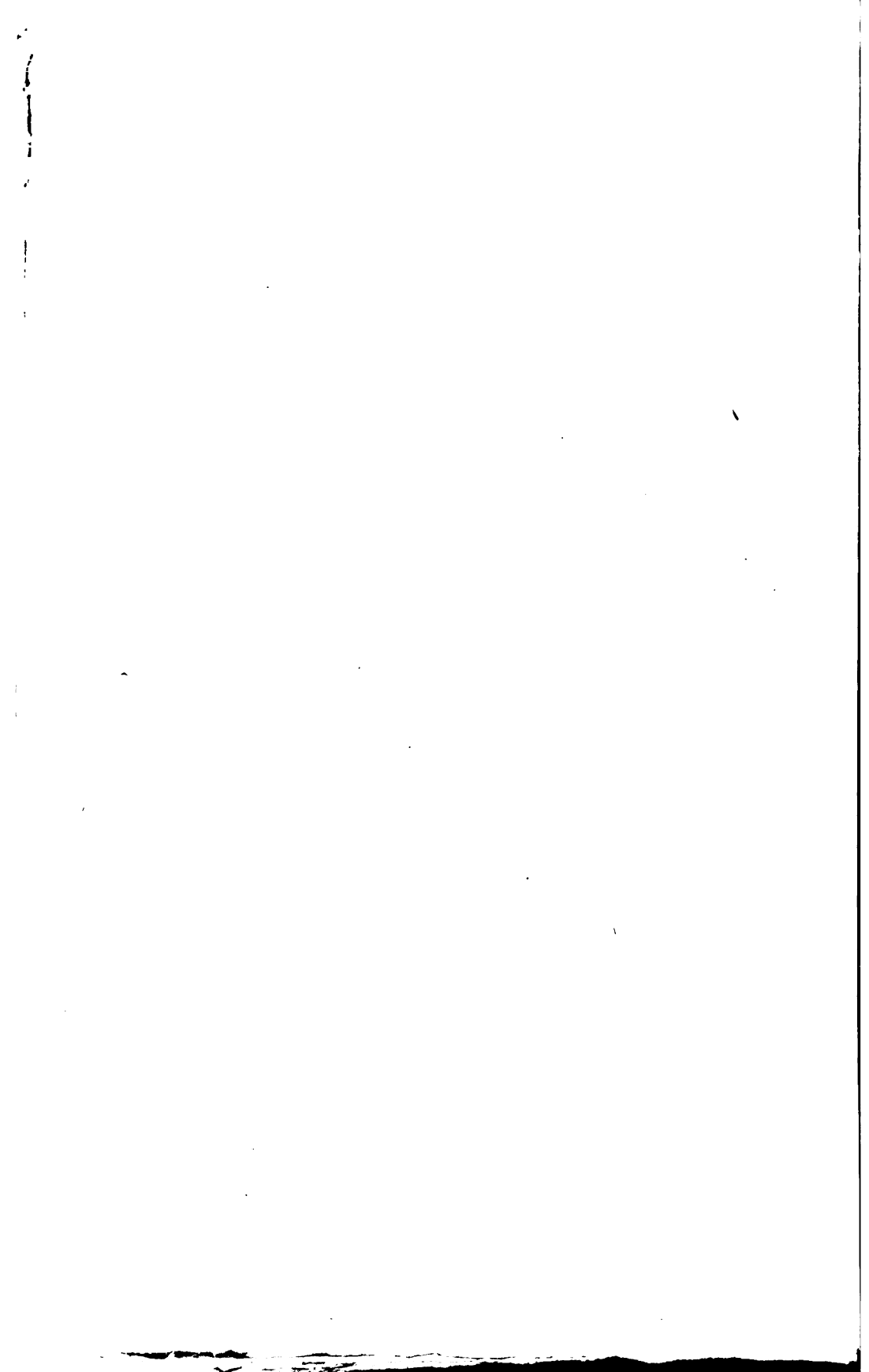
## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

Returning to Mason's "Life," G. W. P. Custis, in his "Recollections and Private Memoirs," says: "The first portrait of Washington by Stuart created a great sensation in Philadelphia. It was soon followed by the celebrated full-length for the Marquis of Lansdowne.<sup>1</sup> This last was undoubtedly the next picture to create a sensation; but there was an interval of at least a year between the painting of the first portrait and the full-length. . . ." Among Stuart's papers the following fragment was found: "A list of gentlemen who are to have copies of the portrait of the President of the United States, Philadelphia, 1795" (then follow several names — Mr. Vaughan's being the only one which has become familiar); it is not at all probable that these pictures were all painted; Philadelphia at that time was full of visitors;

<sup>1</sup> "The first full-length of Washington was a commission from the Marquis of Lansdowne. When it was known that Stuart was to paint such a picture, Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham (Mr. Bingham was a notable merchant of Philadelphia) expressed a strong desire to be at the charge, and to be permitted to present it to the marquis. Stuart, it is said, hesitated, but finally yielded to their wishes, and Mrs. Bingham asked the president to give the artist sittings. This was in April, 1796, as shown in the note from the president to Stuart. 'Sir:—I am under promise to Mrs. Bingham to sit for you to-morrow, at nine o'clock, and wishing to know if it would be convenient to you that I should do so, and whether it shall be at your own house (as she talked of the State House) I send this note to ask information. I am, sir, your obedient servant, *Geo. Washington*

'Monday Evening, 11. April, 1796.'

This painting is now in the possession of Lord Rosebery.



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

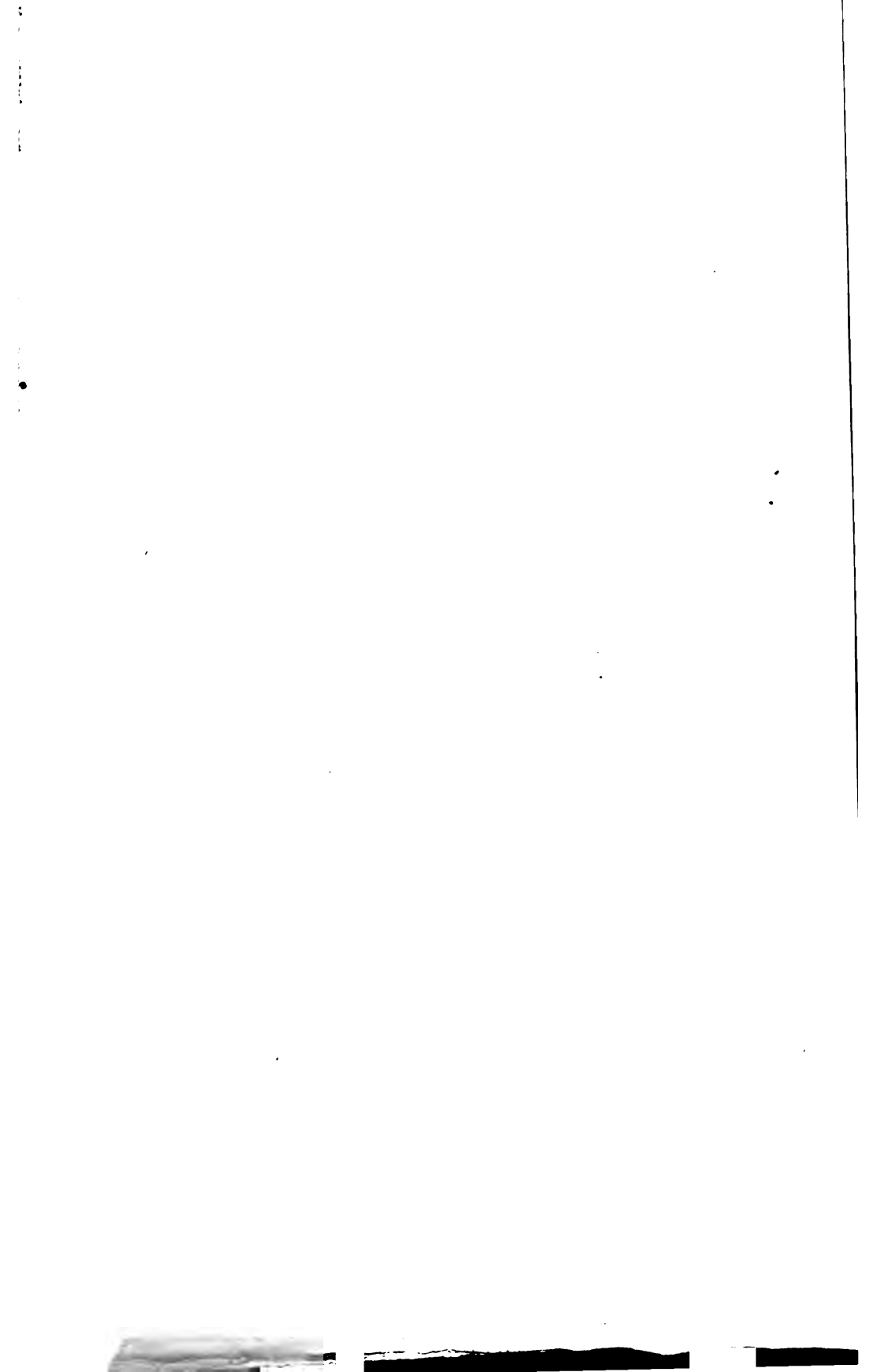
Stuart was crowded with orders for portraits, and he was so overrun with callers that he was forced, a little later, to remove to Germantown. "... It is very easy to establish the fact that the earlier portraits show only the right side of the face, but it is not possible now to say which of the early portraits was the earliest. The finest beyond all comparison is that owned by Dr. William F. Channing, of Providence, R. I. It was painted for Colonel George Gibbs. The warmest friendship existed between Colonel Gibbs and Stuart, and we may feel sure that in painting this picture the artist aimed to do his best."

Mr. Charles Henry Hart, in "Harper's Magazine" for August, 1896, in an article on "Stuart's Lansdowne Portrait of Washington," has the following regarding the pictures of the first sitting to Stuart:

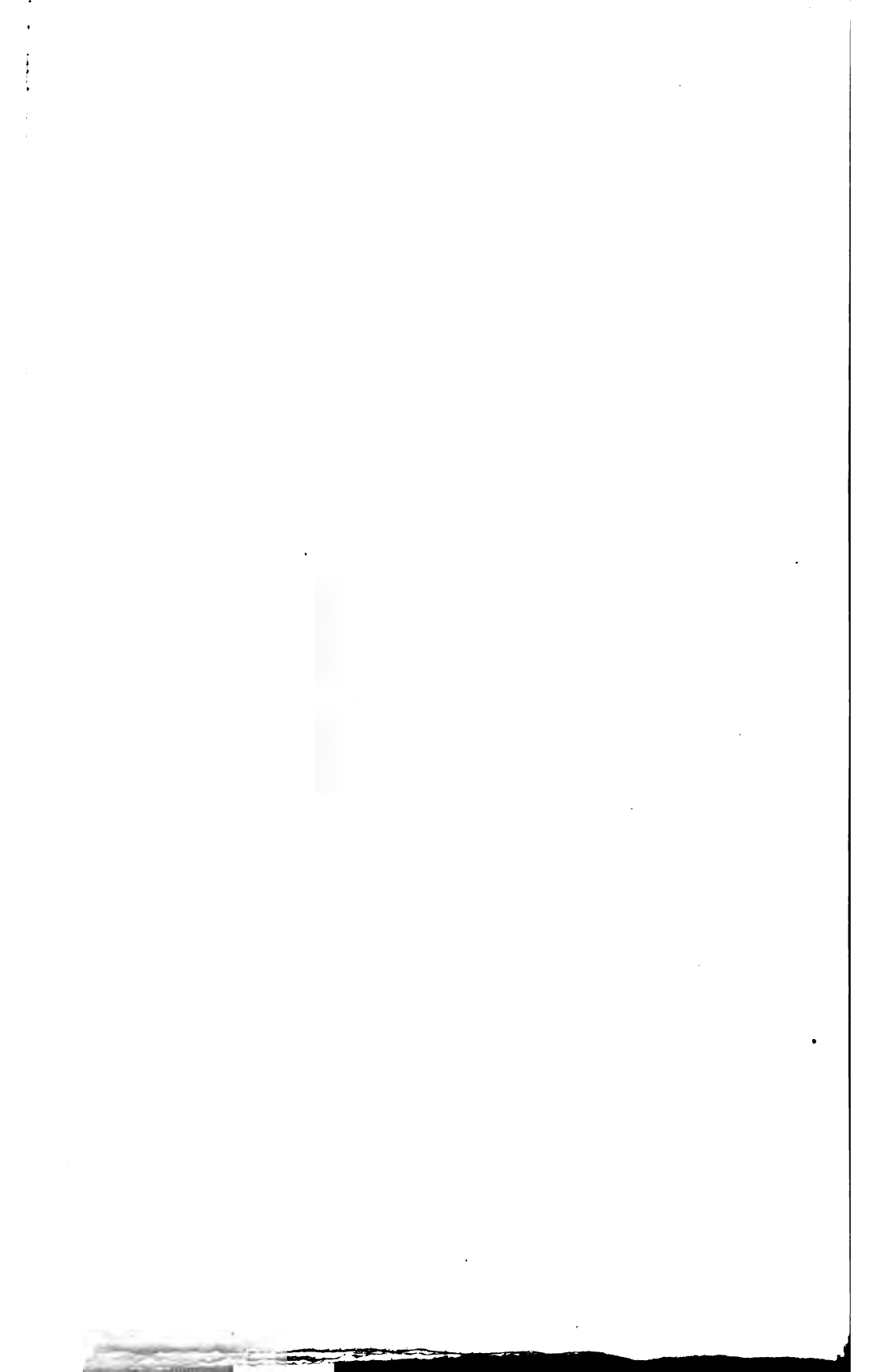
"Gilbert Stuart painted three original portraits of Washington from life. They are known to history, from their owners, in the order of their painting, as the Vaughan, Lansdowne, and Athenæum pictures. The first is a full bust, the second a whole length, and the third a vignette head. The Vaughan portrait

Sold March 17, 12 6-  
Hon. B. Clarke for \$16,100.







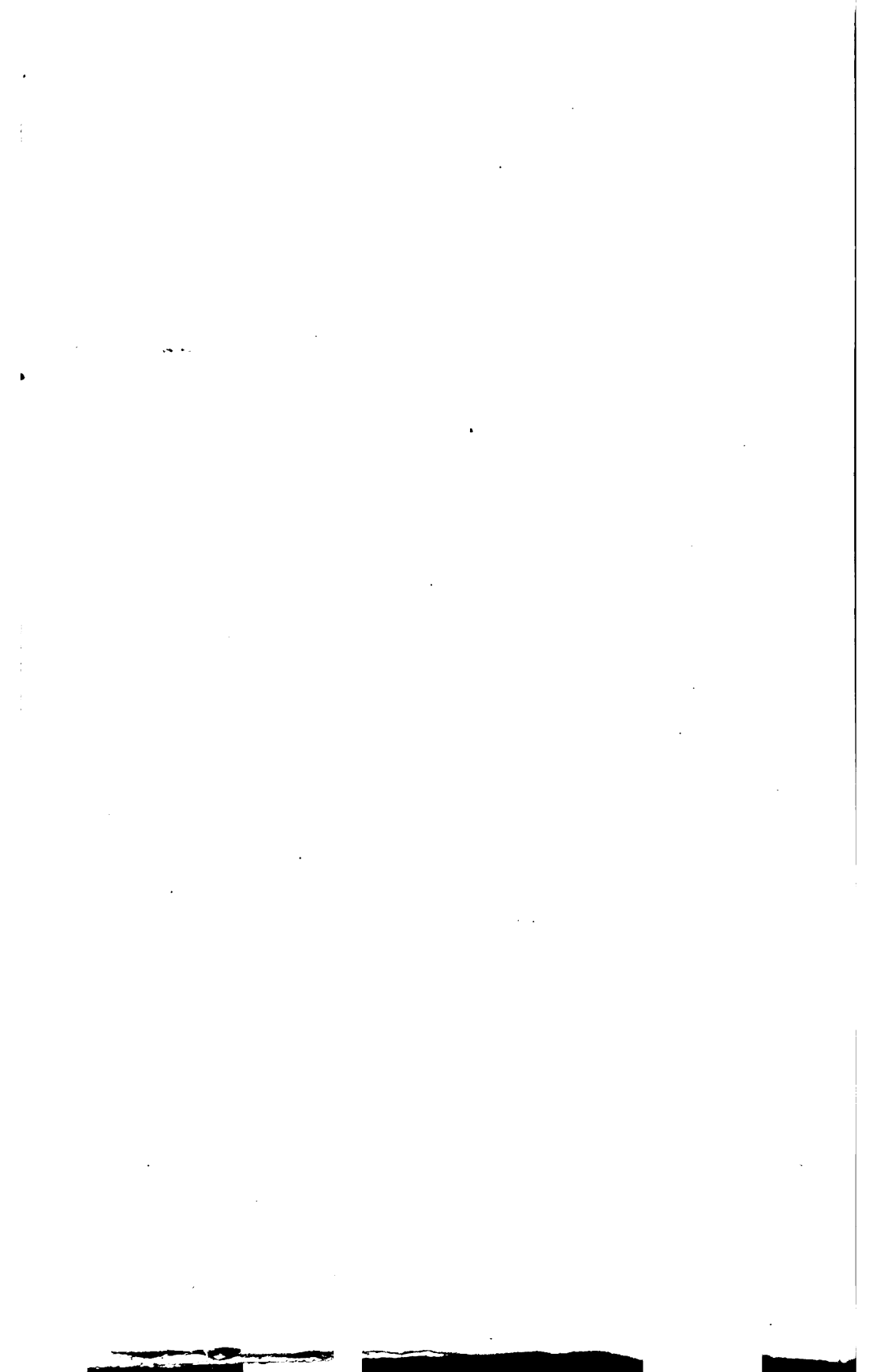


### *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

shows the right side of the face, while the Lansdowne and Athenæum heads show the left side.

"Stuart returned from England in 1792, after an absence of seventeen years, and towards the close of 1794 settled in Philadelphia, with the ostensible object of painting a portrait of the President, carrying with him, it is said, a letter of introduction to Washington from John Jay. Here in the following year he painted his first portrait of Washington, a delineation unfortunately not commonly familiar, but which, after a careful study of the subject, I consider to be the best and most satisfactory likeness of Washington that Stuart painted.

"There are but three pictures known of this type from the easel of Stuart. One, the portrait painted for Samuel Vaughan, of London, which was finely engraved by Holloway for Hunter's sumptuous edition of Lavater's "Physiognomy," now in the possession of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, of Philadelphia. Another, until within a few years lost sight of, much finer than the Vaughan portrait in execution, and with every indication of being the original from life painted for William Bingham, and purchased at the sale of his effects at Philadelphia, in 1807, by the proprietor of the Old Exchange Coffee-house, in whose

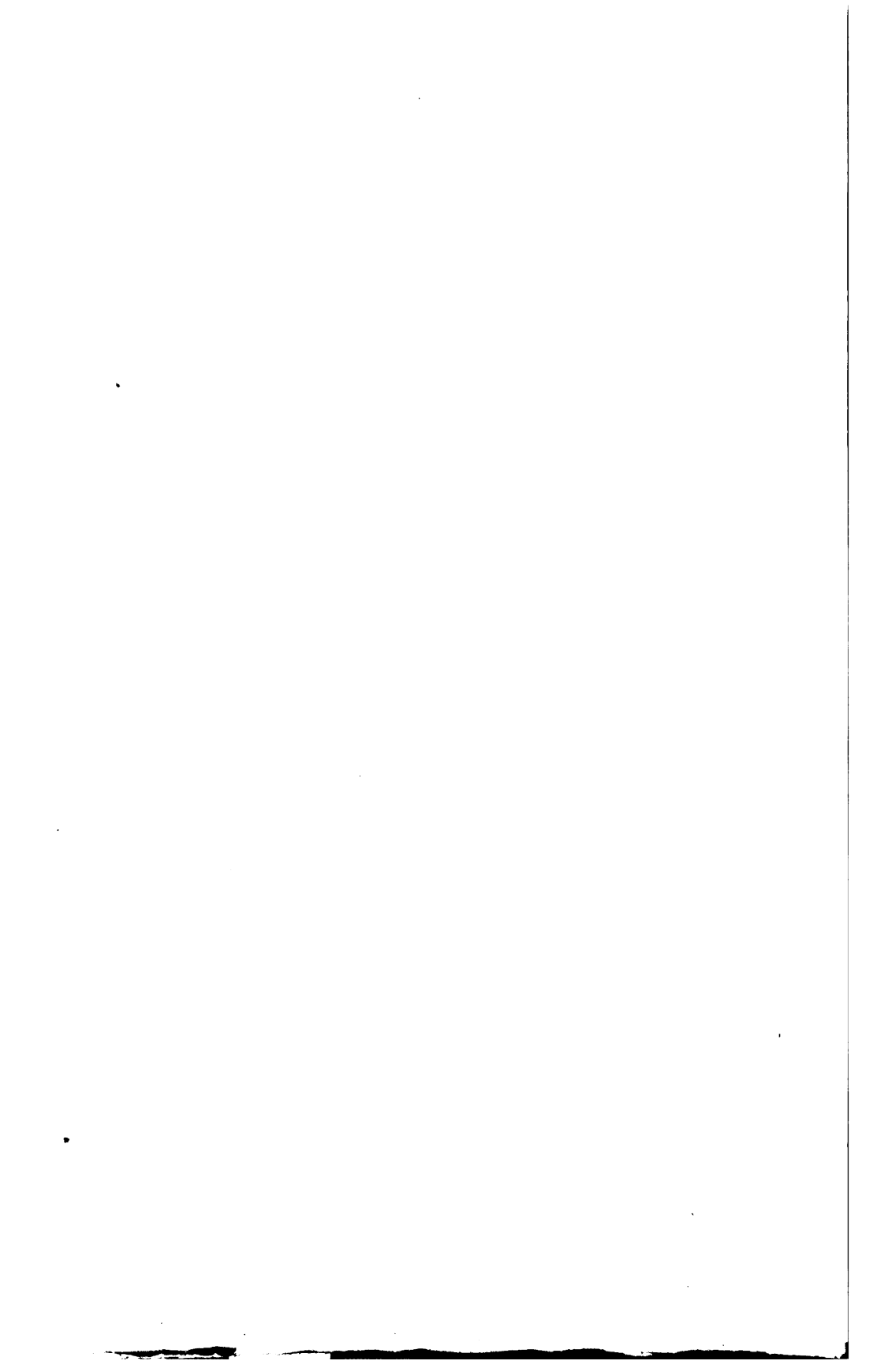


*The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

family it remained for eighty-five years, until it came into the possession of the writer. And the third, somewhat varied from the other two, but a very beautiful and impressive head, known as the Gibbs picture, belonging to Mr. S. P. Avery, of New York.

"For some unaccountable reason Stuart seems not to have been satisfied with this, his first attempt, and he had two later sittings, the last one, or Athenæum head, receiving his preference. Yet he retained the Gibbs picture by him for several years, and is said to have disposed of it to Colonel Gibbs as his best work, and only out of personal friendship. Likewise, when William Birch desired to make an enamel portrait of Washington, Stuart gave him his first head to copy, and Washington stamped it with his approval."

Mason mentions another of the same type as being owned (1879) by "Mrs. Rogers, of Lancaster, Pa., a daughter of General Hand, of the Revolution. . . ." Elizabeth Johnston has the following notice of this picture in her work, "The Original Portraits of Washington," folio, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1882: "A very handsome copy of this first portrait is now in posses-



*The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

sion of Mrs. Anna R. Reilly, of New Haven, Conn. This lady is a great-granddaughter of the 'gallant Irish captain of the Revolution,' General Edward Hand. The picture was purchased in Baltimore in 1806, by Edward Brien, of Philadelphia, who married General Hand's daughter." The late Mr. Stockton Hough, of Trenton, N. J., told Mr. Avery that he had seen this picture (1899) in possession of Mrs. Reilly (née Rogers), who was then living at the Windsor Hotel. Mr. Hough described the picture as being a fair example of the artist, and that the background was red. Another good Stuart, answering to the above description, is now owned by Mr. George L. Rives of this city, who has kindly furnished this clear pedigree of it. "This portrait was for many years in the possession of Professor George Tucker, of the University of Virginia, the biographer and friend of Jefferson. How it came into Professor Tucker's possession is uncertain, although it may have been through his wife, who was Maria Ball Carter, whom he married in 1802, and who was a great-niece of General Washington. From Professor Tucker the portrait came to his daughter, Mrs. George Rives, of Sherwood, Albemarle Co., Va., and was by her sold

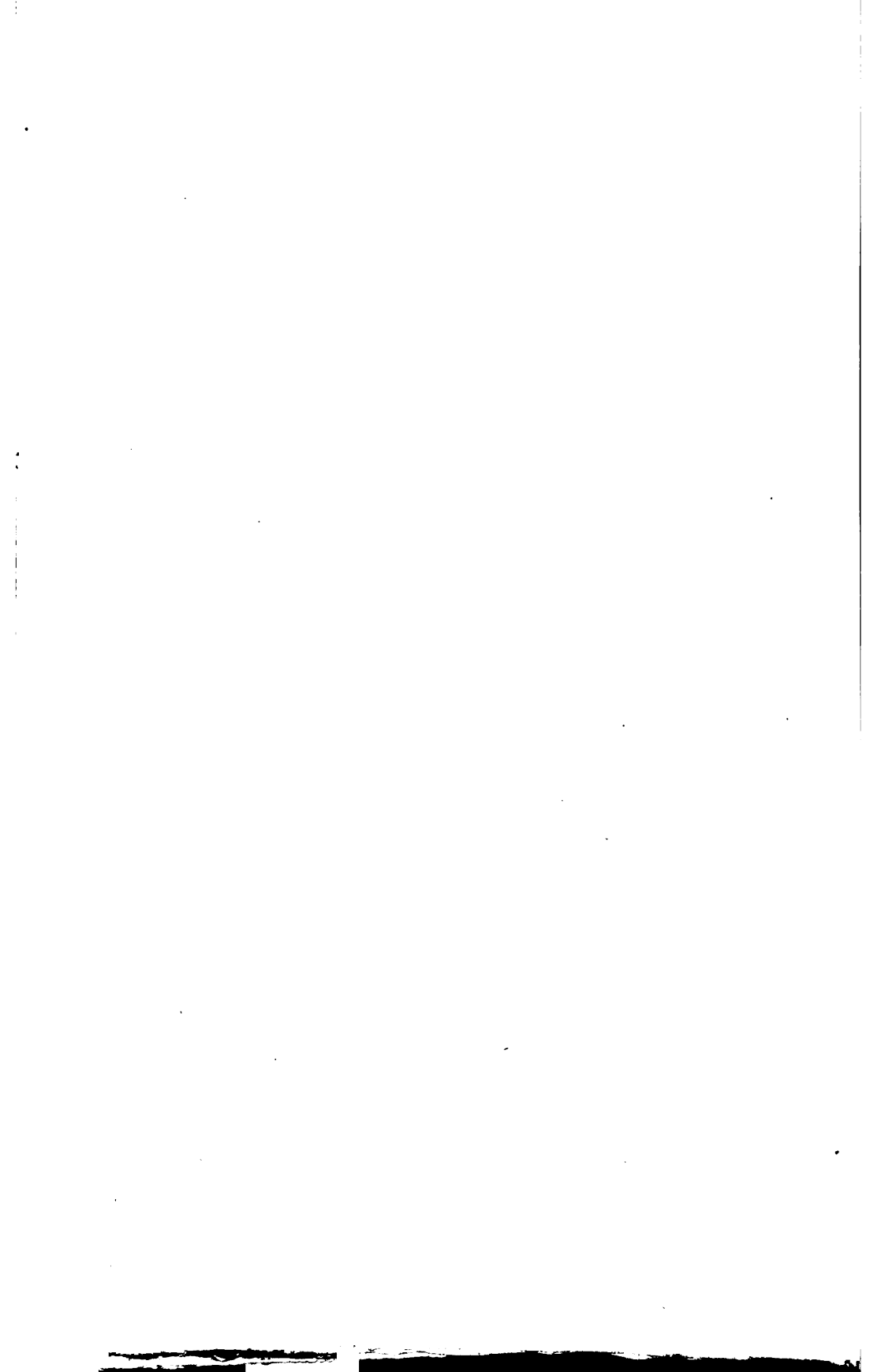




*The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

to Mr. Francis Rives in 1874, who bequeathed it to his son, Mr. George L. Rives."

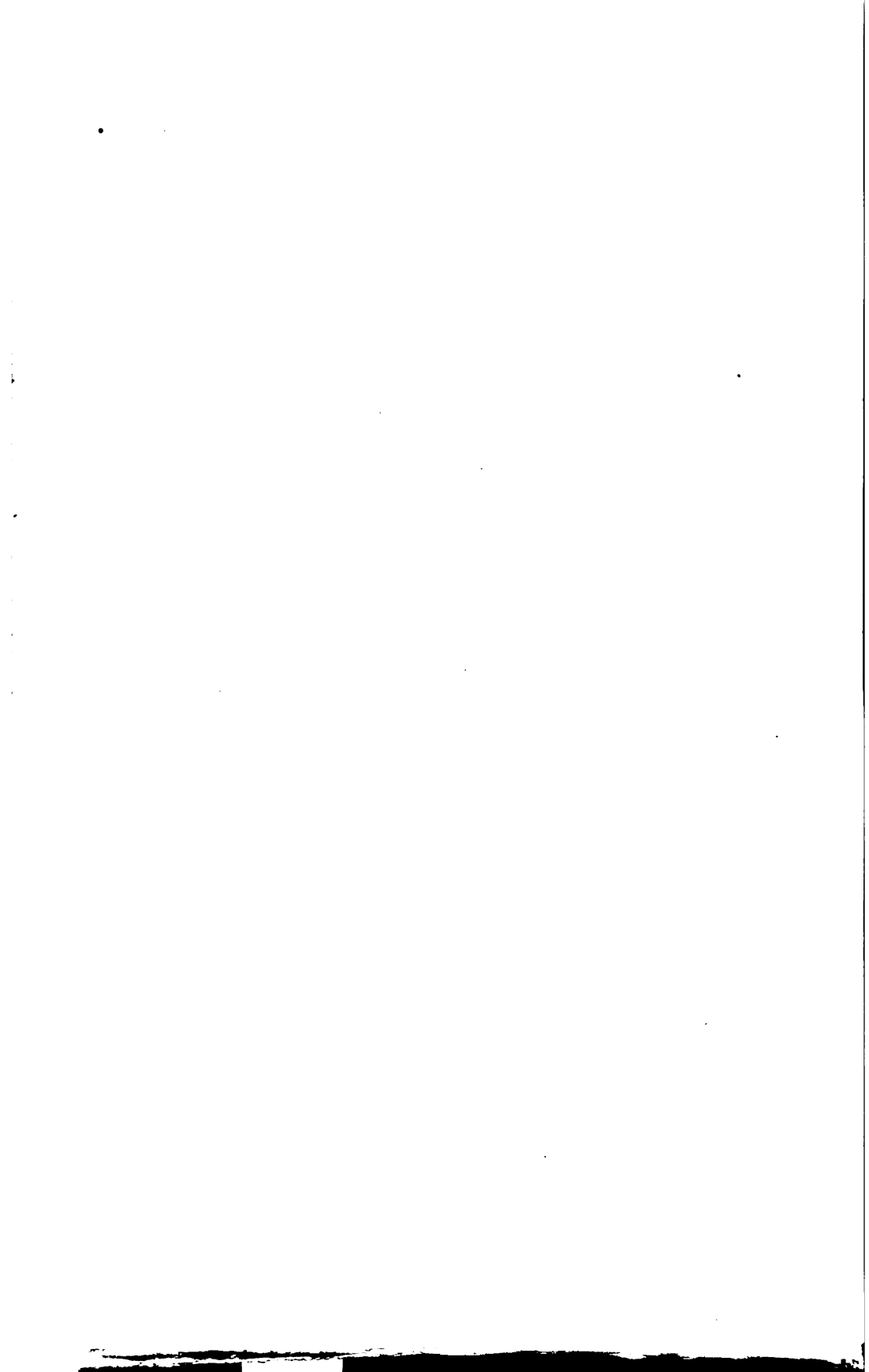
Stuart's third original—destined to become the most known of his works—was a bust-portrait, for which Washington consented to sit at the solicitation of his wife, of whom Stuart painted a companion portrait during the spring or summer of 1796. His fame now burdened him with multiplied demands upon his time. To secure leisure, he left Chestnut Street, and removed to Germantown, where the Athenæum portraits were painted. Different statements have been made as to why Stuart never completely finished these portraits, and retained them thus in his possession until he died. Stuart's explanation is given by Mr. Neagle, the artist, in these words: "Mrs. Washington called often to see the general's portrait, and was desirous to possess it. One day she called with her husband, and begged to know when she might have it. The general himself never pressed it; but on this occasion, as he and his lady were about to retire, he returned to Mr. Stuart, and said that he saw plainly of what advantage the picture was to the painter. He therefore begged the artist to retain the



### *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

picture at his pleasure." Miss Jane Stuart's version of the story is: "When General and Mrs. Washington took their last sittings, her father told Washington that it would be of great importance to him if he could retain the originals, and that Washington consented, saying, 'Certainly, Mr. Stuart, if they are of any consequence to you; I shall be perfectly satisfied with copies from your hand, as it will be impossible for me to sit again.'" Miss Stuart says that the copies that were made were for Mount Vernon.

This pair of (the unfinished) portraits remained in the possession of his family until 1831, when they were bought from his widow, for fifteen hundred dollars, by the Washington Association of Boston, and other subscribers, and were presented to the Boston Athenæum; at present they are loaned to the Museum of Fine Arts, with other paintings belonging to the Athenæum. Of this picture Stuart made a great many copies, good, fairly good, or poor, as the mood or pressure permitted; he used to call it his "nest egg," or his "hundred-dollar bill," and when he needed money he would turn one off rapidly. One of the best of these copies

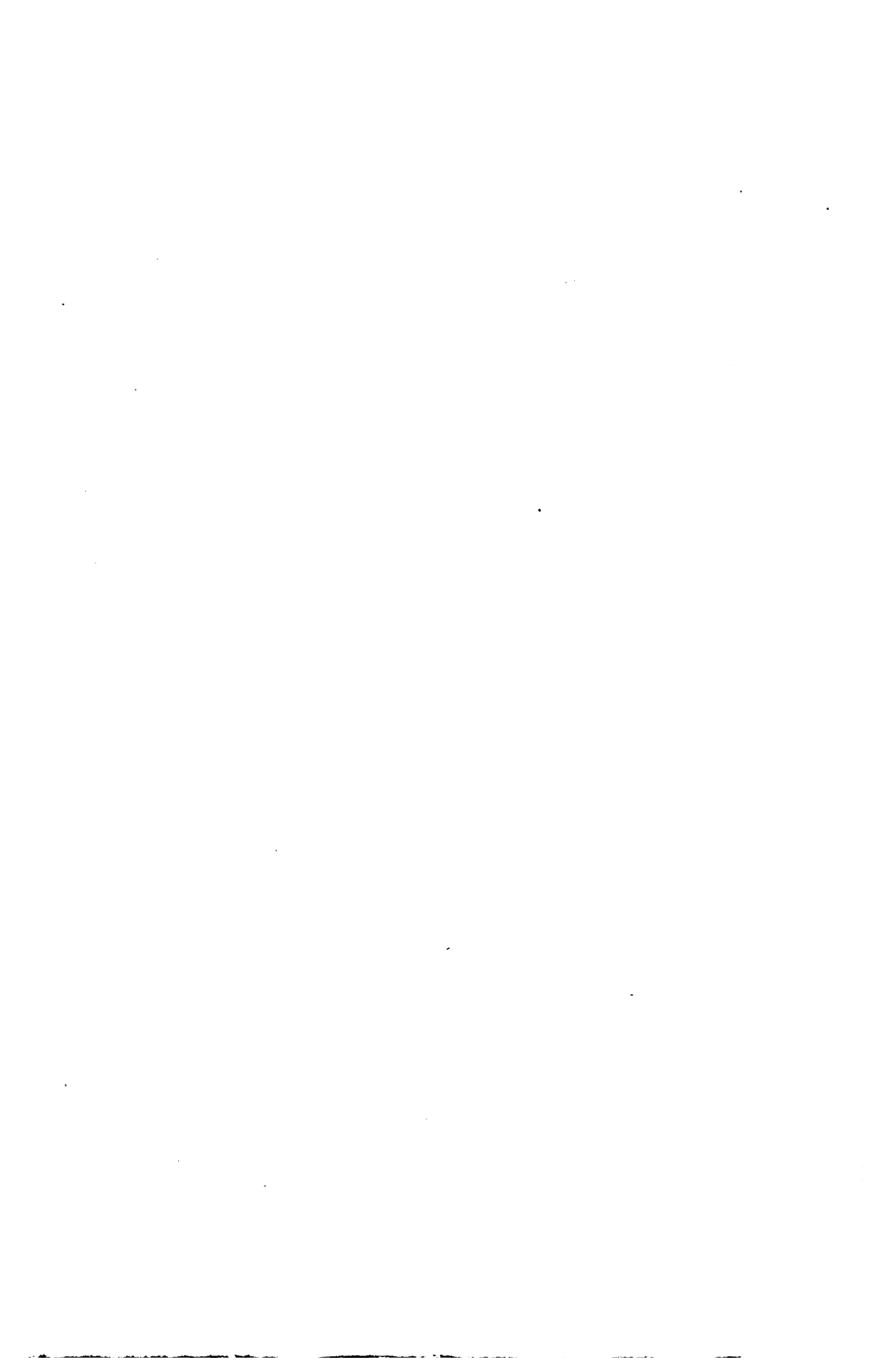


*The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

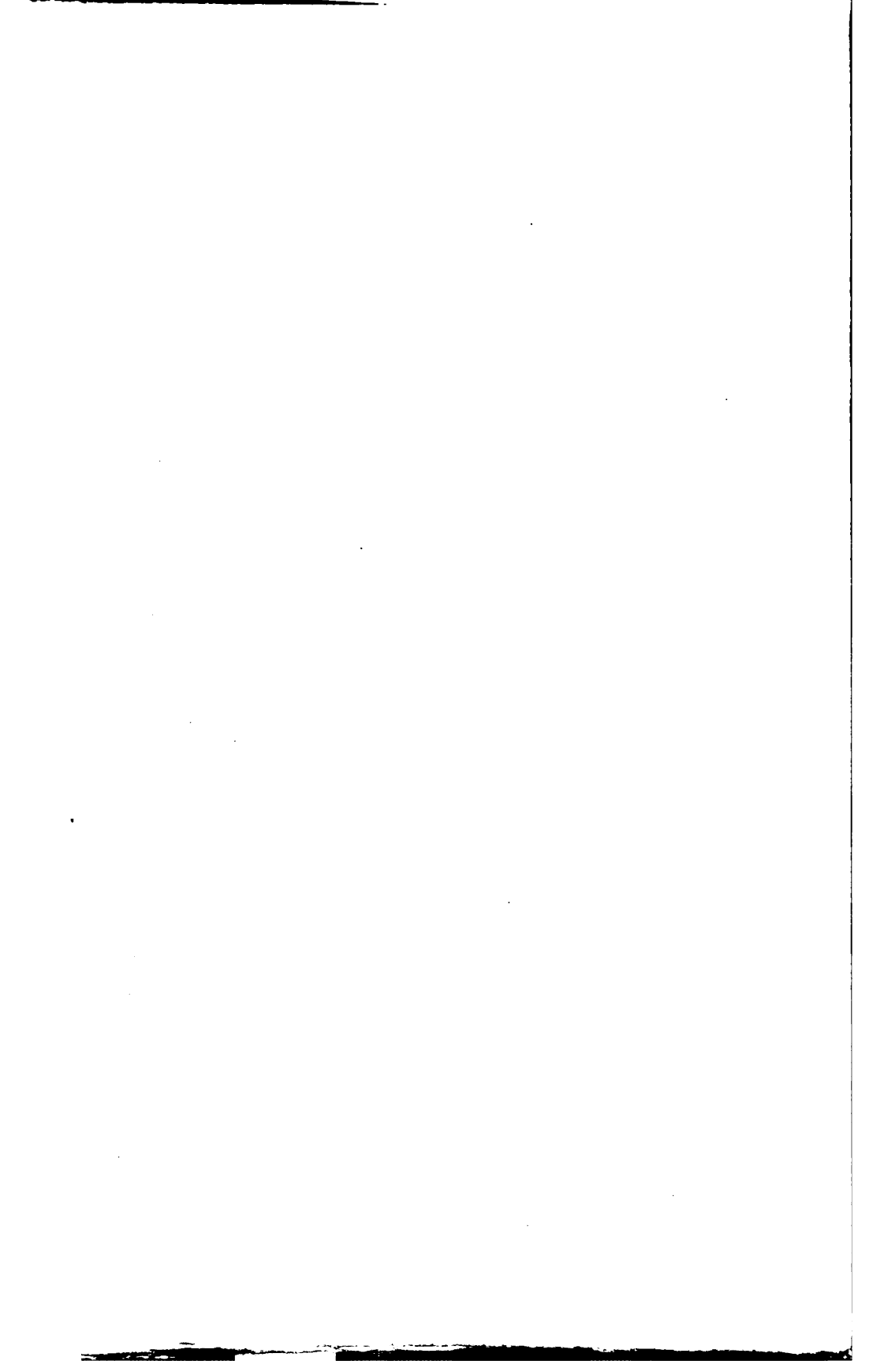
is now in the Walters superb collection at Baltimore. It was painted for Robert Gilmor, also a noted collector of the same city; with the picture came Stuart's receipt for the price of it (one hundred and fifty dollars), and some lines saying that, painting it for such a distinguished amateur, he had taken especial pains with it, and hoped Mr. Gilmor would be pleased. After the Gilmor collection was dispersed, this picture became the property of Admiral Dahlgren, from whose widow the late William T. Walters procured it.

Some of Stuart's copies of this Washington portrait have been destroyed by fire or other accidents, others from want of proper care, injudicious cleaning, etc., have become worthless. Stuart's daughter made quite a number of copies of the same picture; James Frothingham, Stuart's pupil, made several most excellent copies, which to the unlearned might pass as the master's work. Others have made copies, *from copies*. Considering these facts, it is not difficult to account for the numerous "*Stuart's Washington*" which are constantly turning up, to the dismay of artist-judges and other genuine experts.









### *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

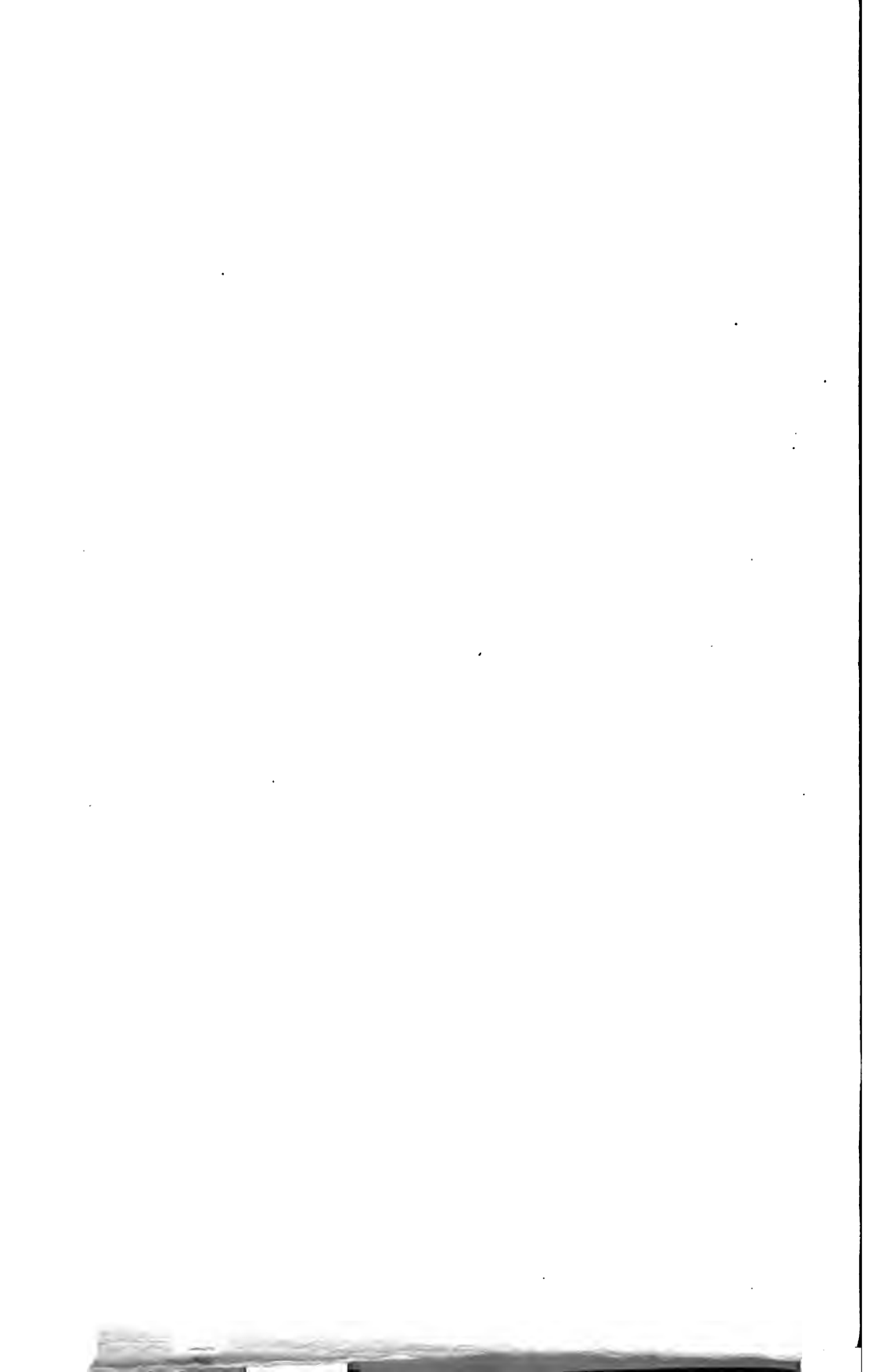
Washington Allston was asked to pronounce a eulogy on Stuart, but he was forced to decline, owing to failing health; he, however, wrote the following obituary, which appeared in the columns of the Boston "Daily Advertiser": a memorial which in paying a just and beautiful tribute to the genius of Stuart, did credit to the heart of his brother artist.

#### **Gilbert Stuart.**

**Born December 3, 1755.**

**Died July 27, 1828.**

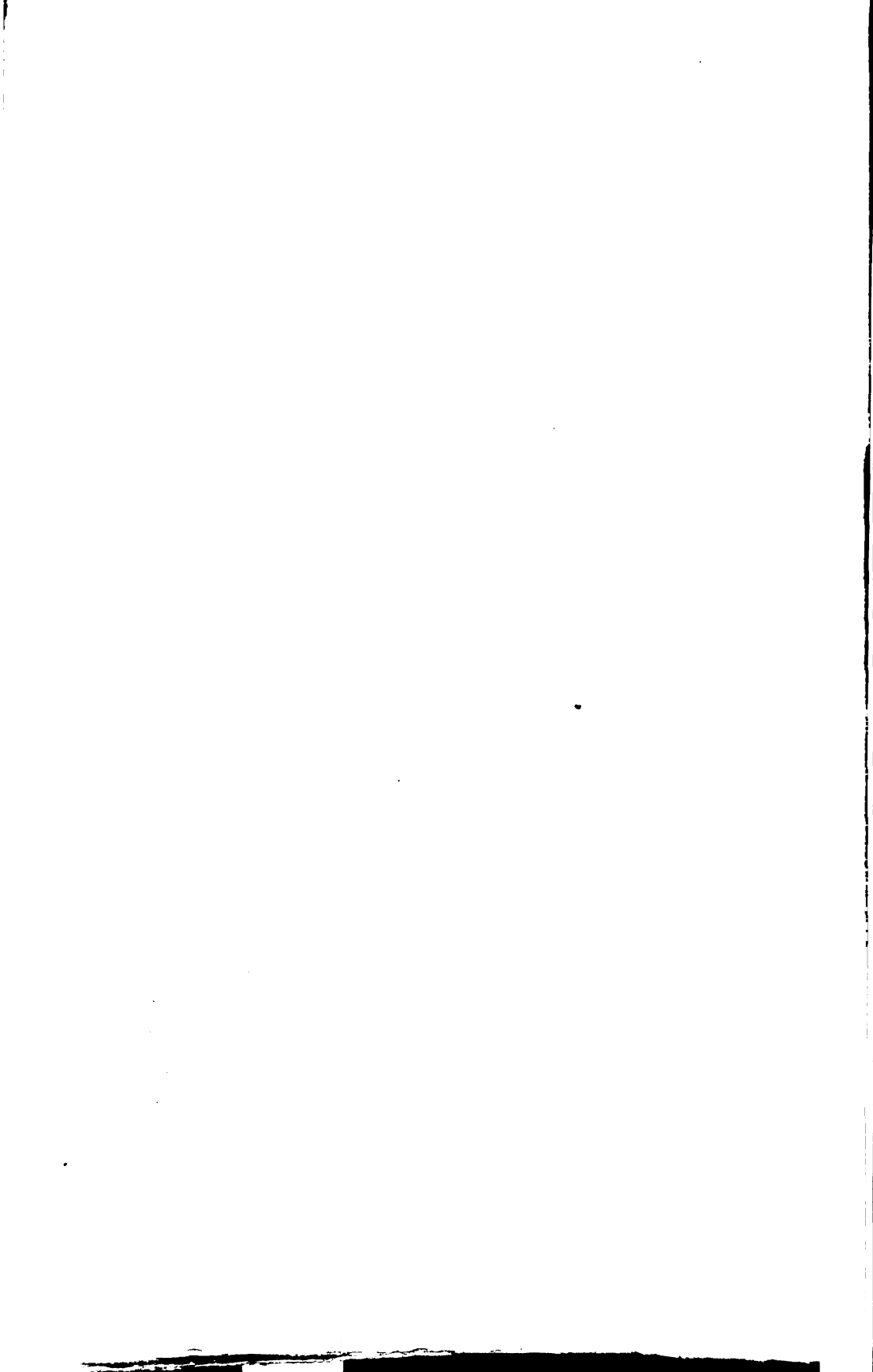
"During the last week the remains of Gilbert Stuart, Esq., were consigned to the tomb. He was born in the State of Rhode Island, in the year 1755. Soon after coming of age he went to England, where he became the pupil of Mr. West, the late distinguished President of the Royal Academy. Stuart there rose to eminence; nor was it a slight distinction that his claims were acknowledged even during the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds. His high reputation as a portrait painter, as well in Ireland as in England, having thus introduced him to a large acquaintance among the higher classes of society,



### *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

both fortune and fame attended his progress, inasmuch that, had he chosen to remain in England, they would have doubtless awarded him their highest gifts. But, admired and patronized as he was, he chose to return to his native country. He was impelled to this step, as he often declared, by a desire to give to Americans a faithful portrait of Washington, and thus, in some measure, to associate his own with the name of the Father of his Country. And well is his ambition justified in the sublime head he has left us: a nobler personification of wisdom and goodness, reposing in the majesty of a serene countenance, is not to be found on canvas. He returned to America in 1792, and resided chiefly in Philadelphia and Washington, in the practice of his profession, till about 1806, when he removed to Boston, where he remained to the time of his death. During the last ten years of his life he had to struggle with many infirmities; yet such was the vigor of his mind that he seemed to triumph over the decay of nature, and give to some of his last productions all the truth and splendor of his prime.

"Gilbert Stuart was not only one of the first painters of his time, but must have been admitted, by all who had an opportunity of know-



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ing him, to have been, even out of his art, an extraordinary man; one who would have found distinction easy in any other profession or walk of life. His mind was of a strong and original cast, his perceptions as clear as they were just, and in the power of illustration he has rarely been equaled on almost every subject, more especially on such as were connected with his art; his conversation was marked by wisdom and knowledge, while the uncommon precision and eloquence of his language seemed ever to receive additional grace from his manner, which was that of a well-bred gentleman. "The narrations and anecdotes with which his knowledge of men and of the world had stored his memory, and which he often gave with great beauty and dramatic effect, were not unfrequently employed by Mr. Stuart in a way and with an address peculiar to himself. From this store it was his custom to draw largely while occupied with his sitters—apparently for their amusement; but his object was rather, by thus banishing all restraint, to call forth, if possible, some involuntary traits of natural character. But these glimpses of character, mixed as they are in all men with so much that belongs to their age and association, would have been of



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little use to the ordinary observer; for the faculty of distinguishing between the accidental and the permanent—in other words, between the conventional expression which arises from manners and the more subtle indication of the individual mind—is indeed no common one; and by no one with whom we are acquainted was this faculty possessed in so remarkable a degree. It was this which enabled him to animate his canvas,—not with the appearance of mere general life, but with that peculiar, distinctive life which separates the humblest individual from his kind. He seemed to dive into the thoughts of men, for they were made to rise and speak on the surface. Were other evidence wanting, this talent alone were sufficient to establish his claims as a man of genius, since it is the privilege of genius alone to measure at once the highest and the lowest. In his happiest efforts, no one ever surpassed him in embodying (if we may so speak) these transient apparitions of the soul.

“In a word, Gilbert Stuart was, in its widest sense, a philosopher in his art; he thoroughly understood its principles, as his works bear witness,—whether as to the harmony of colors, or of lines, or of light and shadow,—showing that

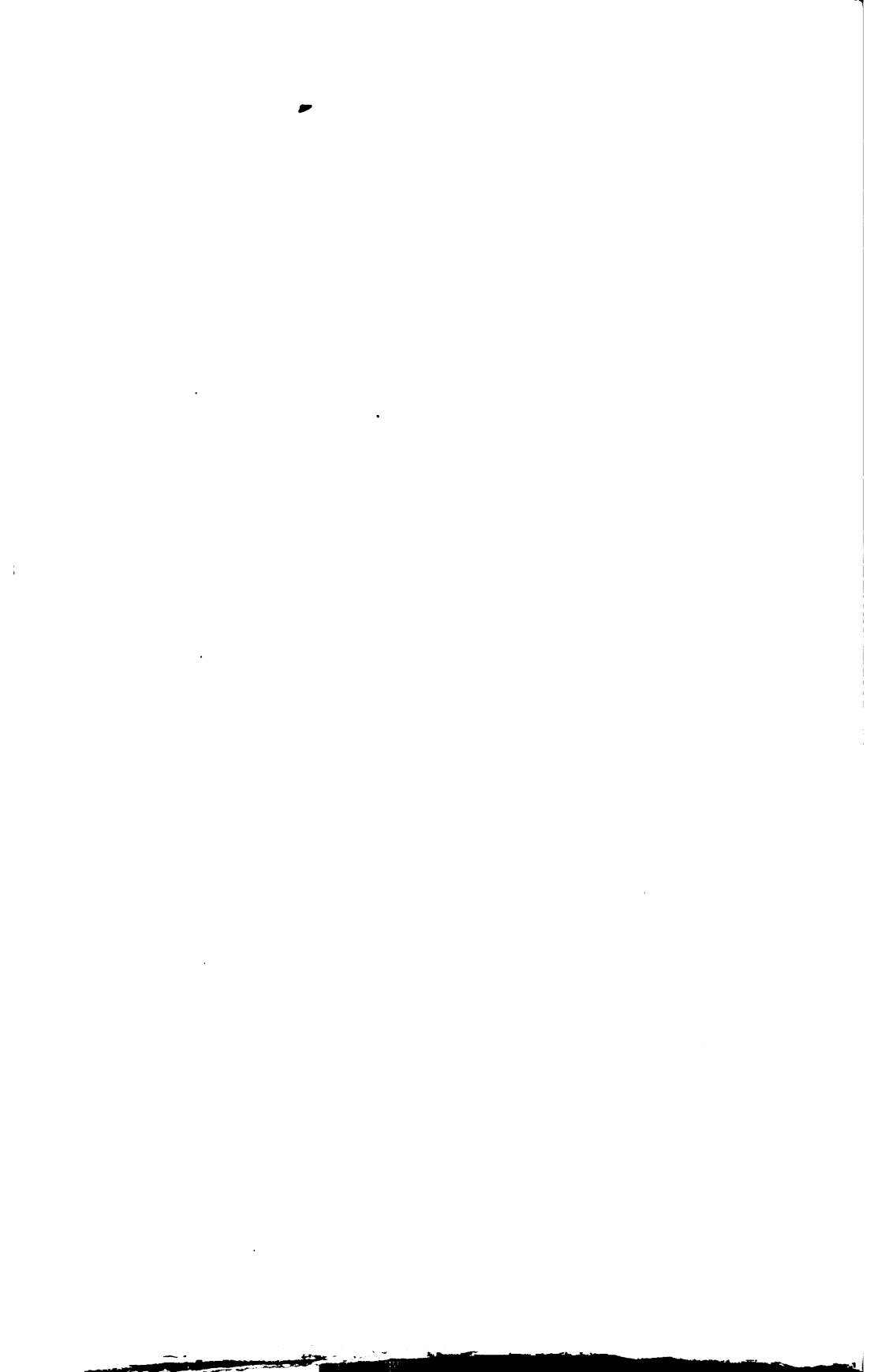




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exquisite sense of a whole which only a man of genius can realize and embody.

"We cannot close this brief notice without a passing record of his generous bearing toward his professional brethren. He never suffered the manliness of his nature to darken with the least shadow of jealousy; but where praise was due he gave it freely, and gave it, too, with a grace which showed that, loving excellence for its own sake, he had a pleasure in praising. To the younger artists he was uniformly kind and indulgent, and most liberal of his advice, which no one ever properly asked but he received, and in a manner no less courteous than impressive. The unbroken kindness and friendship with which he honored the writer of this imperfect sketch will never be forgotten. In the world of art Mr. Stuart has left a void that will not soon be filled. And well may his country say, 'A great man has passed from amongst us.' But Gilbert Stuart has bequeathed her what is paramount to power,—since no power can command it,—the rich inheritance of his fame."





## MATTERS OF FACT

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In confirmation of Allston's reference to Stuart's "high reputation as a portrait painter, as well in Ireland as in England" (Stuart spent seventeen years there), the following list of portraits of distinguished subjects painted during that period, and *engraved in mezzotint*, and published from 1781 (only six years after Stuart arrived in London) down to 1806, taken from John Chaloner Smith's work on English mezzotints, will be found most interesting. These engravings are all of folio size, and for the full lengths, of which there are several; the plates are extra large, and executed by the best engravers of the period. Fine-proof impressions of some of these plates fetch at auction sales sometimes as much as the artist received for the original painting. It is amusing to note the various ways the painter's name was engraved on the plate. Often it was *Stewart* instead of Stuart, most frequently it was C. G., then simply G. or J.—then *Gabriel* which was affixed to the line engraving by James Heath of the Lansdowne picture, published in 1800. One plate attributed the painting to "Gainsboro and Stuart" (there is a small line-engraving of J. S. Copley, the painter, which is attributed to Gainsborough, but really painted by Stuart). We give the name of the subject, name of the mezzotint engraver, and date of the publication (as per J. C. Smith): Fothergill, John, M.D., *V. Green*, 1781. Rogers, Rev. John



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

(engraver's name not given), published 1785. Kemble, John, as Richard III., *G. Keating*, 1788. Manchester, George Montague, Duke of, *John Jones*, 1790. Fitzgibbon, Lord John, *C. H. Hodges*, 1790. Beresford, Right Hon. John, *C. H. Hodges*, 1790. Cleaver, Eusby, *Bromley*, 1790. Leinster, Wm. Robert, Duke of, *C. H. Hodges*, 1790. Grattan, Rt. Hon. Henry, *C. H. Hodges*, 1792. Foster, John, Rt. Hon., *C. H. Hodges*, 1792. Conyngham, Rt. Hon. Wm. B., *C. H. Hodges*, 1792. Brownlow, Rt. Hon. Wm., *C. H. Hodges*, 1792. Jervis, Sir John, *Robert Laurie*, 1794. Carnarvon, Rt. Hon., Earl of, *W. Ward*, 1795. Harvey, Captain John, *J. Murphy*, 1795. Shaw, Robert, *W. Ward*, 1797. Lewis, John, *R. Field* (no date). St. Vincent, the Earl of, *J. R. Smith*, 1797. St. Vincent, the Earl of (quite a different picture), *W. Barnard*, 1798. Duke of Northumberland, *Charles Turner*, 1804. Malton, Mr. Thomas, *Wm. Barney*, 1806. Preston, Rev. William, *W. Dickinson* (no date). Sidney, Lord Viscount, *Jno. Young* (no date).

(Mr. Avery has a set of these rare mezzotints.)

In addition to the above, numerous other engravings have been published in England from portraits painted by Stuart, during his residence abroad, executed in line or stipple, by Wm. Sharp, Bartolozzi, Facius, Meyer, Holloway, Ridley, Hull, Fry, Caroline Watson, and others.

The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, 1795, measures 25 by 30 inches—a favorite size of Stuart's; it is painted on canvas with a kind of surface generally used by him. The head and features are firmly modeled, the flesh has those delicate gradations of carnation which he handled so ably, rich and refined at the same time; the black velvet coat has all the texture and sheen of the material itself, no part being at all vague, the white shirt-ruffle shows that firm and peculiar "touch" which artists have always admired in such details by Stuart. The background is made up of a cur-



## *The "Gibbs-Channing" Washington*

tain, exquisitely expressed in delicate shades of olive-green-gray color; at the right is an opening with a landscape suggested. This treatment is a distinguishing feature of this particular representation of the first sitting, each of the other examples having *red backgrounds*. It is seldom that a work of art has remained so long in the one family, over eighty years have passed during its ownership by three persons — sacredly guarded, never tampered with, perfectly transmitted.

The earliest public exhibition of this painting of which we have found any record is when it was on view, with a considerable number of Stuart's portraits, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, during the summer of 1860, when it attracted admiration, surprise and discussion. Previous to that time it could only have been seen by the personal friends of the Gibbs and Channing families. Mr. Avery never saw the picture until 1888, when it was in the care of the poet, Mr. E. C. Stedman (a relative of Dr. Channing), who put it on view, for an evening, at a monthly meeting of the "Century" Association, New York. Later on Mr. Stedman sent it to the loan exhibition in commemoration of the centennial of Washington's inauguration 1789-1889, held at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, 1889. Soon after this Mr. Avery purchased the picture. It was next seen in a loan collection at the National Academy of Design 1893-94. During several months in 1896, it was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in a retrospective collection of paintings by American artists, and at the Union League Club, New York, February 22, 1897. It next figured in the exhibition of engraved portraits of Washington held at the Grolier Club, December, 1899, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of his death.

The first reproduction of this work of which we have any knowledge, is a small photograph taken 1879 by Coleman & Co., of Providence, R. I., for Dr. Channing, and which was used for the fine line-engraving made by C. Burt, who put in a plain, flat background, omitting the curtain and landscape





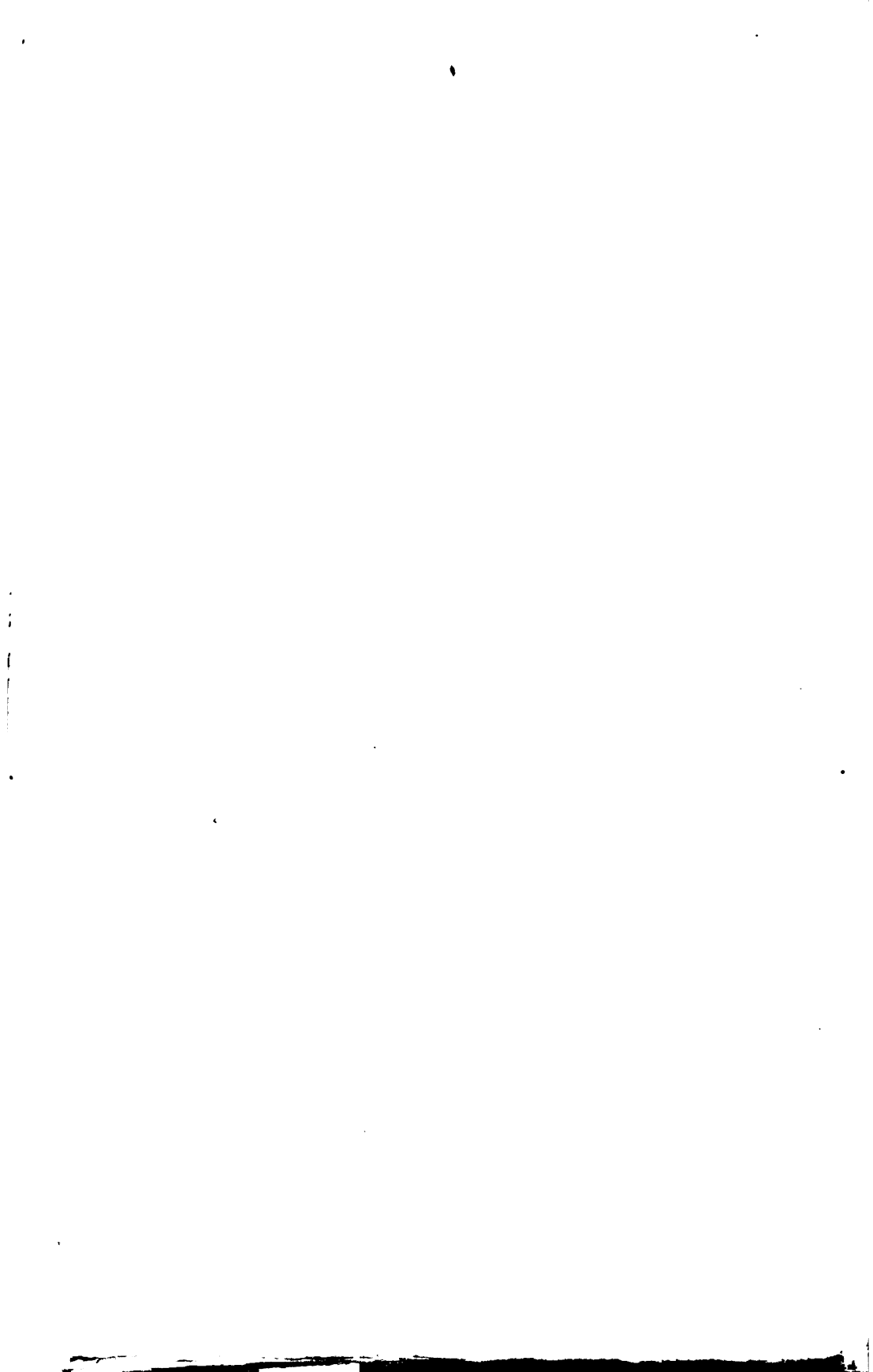
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glimpses, and also for the photogravure by Goupil, of Paris, both appearing in the handsome quarto vol.: "The Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart," by Geo. C. Mason, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1879. There is a large photo-print (rather black) of this picture in Elizabeth B. Johnston's work, "The Original Portraits of Washington," folio, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1882. It was engraved on wood by G. Kruell, from the Coleman photograph, for "Harper's Magazine," April, 1889, to accompany an article on the Centennial celebration. It was also represented (but why in an oval form?) in the official "History of the Centennial Celebration of George Washington as First President of the United States," edited by Clarence Winthrop Bowen, Esq., Ph.D., Appleton & Co., 1892. A most excellent photograph by the "Anneline" process, size 10x13, was taken direct from the painting for Mr. Avery by Wm. Kurtz, 1895. A "half-tone" engraving from that photograph was reproduced for "Harper's Magazine," August, 1896, as one of the illustrations to Mr. Chas. Henry Hart's article, "Stuart's Lansdowne Portrait of Washington." And Thos. Johnson, the engraver on wood, executed a very successful rendering from the Kurtz photograph (assisted by a close study of the painting), which appeared in "Scribner's Magazine" for June, 1898, for Lodge's "Story of the Revolution."

The reproductions by the "Albertype" process of the Gibbs-Channing painting, the engraving by Holloway of the Vaughan painting, and the portrait of Stuart, after Neagle, were made for this little history by Mr. Edward Bierstadt, N. Y.











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